

CHANDAMAMA

MARCH 1983

RS. 1.75



Turn to Page 15
for the story of
"KRISHNA"



TRIP TO SPACE

Captain Kumar had promised to take Ravi and Alka along with him, on one of his space trips. So one day, he flew into space with them both and showed them what the different planets really looked like. He also showed them how a space ship was flown and how the light on the radio panel signalled danger, if their fleet got close to a planet, or were being followed by enemy space ships. Just as they had finished studying the radio panel, the light showed red, signalling danger. Captain Kumar quickly switched on the TV screen — two enemy ships were following them! There was no time to turn around and go back. The enemy ships were too close. Thinking fast, he showed Ravi and Alka the seven mission goals on the left and right of the space ship. "As soon as you see

the enemy space ships on the centre of the cross, on your special screens, during the whole mission," he instructed. By now, even Ravi and Alka were getting a little nervous, so they ate a Ravalgaon sweet. You see, they always carried "Ravalgaon" sweets, toffees and eclairs, wherever they went — even into space! Captain Kumar too ate a Ravalgaon toffee, before going into the control room. "Z-a-a-g! Z-a-a-g!" — both Ravi and Alka hit their targets, right on the mark. Captain Kumar was so happy, he promised to give them anything they asked for. Back home, both the kids told the Captain that they wanted to study in the school for space trips and both wanted a packet of their favourite "Ravalgaon" sweets, toffees and eclairs. The Captain, of course, kept his promise.

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- Why is the Tower of Pisa leaning? • What is dialysis? • Do cannibals still exist in the world? • Why do women have sweet voice? ■ Why is one of our feet bigger than the other?



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1st March 1983

B. VIJWANATHA REDDI
Signature of the Publisher



An Appeal to the Readers

We have always resisted the idea of a price increase for your magazine. We have done so only when circumstances have left no option for us and that too with the greatest hesitation, for it has been a matter of policy with us not to pinch the purses of our young, devoted readers.

A contingency has arisen again now after two years. The rapid increase in the cost of production in the recent months has compelled us to slightly enhance the price of CHANDAMAMA in all languages from the issues dated April 1983. The magazines will be available for Rs.2.00 per copy.

We had to take this step, reluctantly again, as we did not like to reduce the content or make any compromise on its quality. We are sure, you will view the situation with sympathy and understanding.

—Publishers



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CONTEST NO. 29



NEXT ISSUE

- *Story of Krishna*
- *Krishna Kripalani recounts a legend of Sindh.*
- *Secret of the Great Pyramid— in the series Unsolved Mysteries*
- *Akbar Grows Powerful— In Story of India*
- *The Wonderful Bird: An Indonesian folktale*
- *Dilemma with Diamonds: A Mystery of Malipuram*
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- *Watch Out— There's A Leopard About! —Nature's Kingdom*
- *An Exchange of Joys—A legend of India*

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AND Let Us Know, Newsflash, Contests and more.





THANKS, DEAR CONTESTANTS

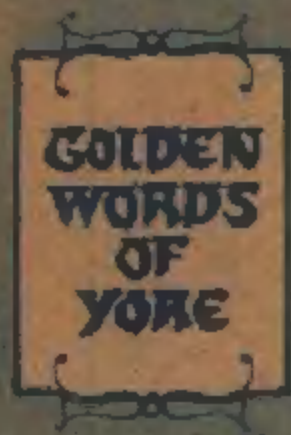
We are happy to announce the results of the first series of contests announced in January. While most of the entries were of a good standard, many participants did not remember the word-limit. That is why several well-written pieces did not qualify for consideration.

The prize for Contest A is shared by B. Vasudevamurthy Rao, Jeevan Nagar, Bombay; Sharada V. Joshi, Neral Raigad; Rema Pillai, Calcutta Girls' High School, Calcutta; and N. Radhika, S.P. Mukherjee Road, Calcutta. Extracts from their essays are to be found in page 10.

The Prize for Contest B is shared by S.V.Ramanan, Ranchi; Padmavathy Ramesh, Madras; and Swati Sharma, Valsad.

When a saying is attributed to more than one author, the entries that trace the oldest author are considered to be correct. The quotes for Contest B in January were from Gray, Rochefoucauld, Pascal, Pope, and Seneca.

Please see the topics for the next contest in Page 62.



ऐश्वर्ये वा सुविस्तीर्णे व्यसने वा सुदारणे ।
रज्ज्वेव पुरुषं बद्ध्वा कृतान्तः परिकर्यति ॥

*Aishvareye vā suvistirṇe vyasane vā sudārṇe,
Rajjveva puruṣam baddhvā kṛtāntaḥ parikarṇati.*

Be one affluent with wealth or miserable with poverty — one will be dragged about by Fate as if tied to a rope.

The Ramayana



THIS IS THEIR DREAMS OF THE FUTURE OF THEIR MOTHERLAND

Reproduced below are passages from the prize-winning entries for the essay-contest held in January on MY DREAM OF FUTURE INDIA.

B.Vasudevamurthy Rao, Bombay

Man is no more a nomad—shrouded in ignorance and fearing the forces of nature. He has conquered all natural forces and he even penetrated the colossal extent of space which has frightened him two milleniums ago. His magnificent change is not only the contribution of millions of hands and heads but also of millions of dreams translated into reality by people. Responsible citizens of every country like to dream about their country and these dreams have shaped nations. I also like to dream about my country and I want my dreams to be realised.

The India of my dreams is not a chaotic and turbulent India. The people will not be self-centred, backward, corrupt and politically ignorant. The society will be free from exploitation, strife and tension. The people will be aware of their responsibilities and will strive hard to increase national productivity and root out social evils.

N.Radika, Calcutta

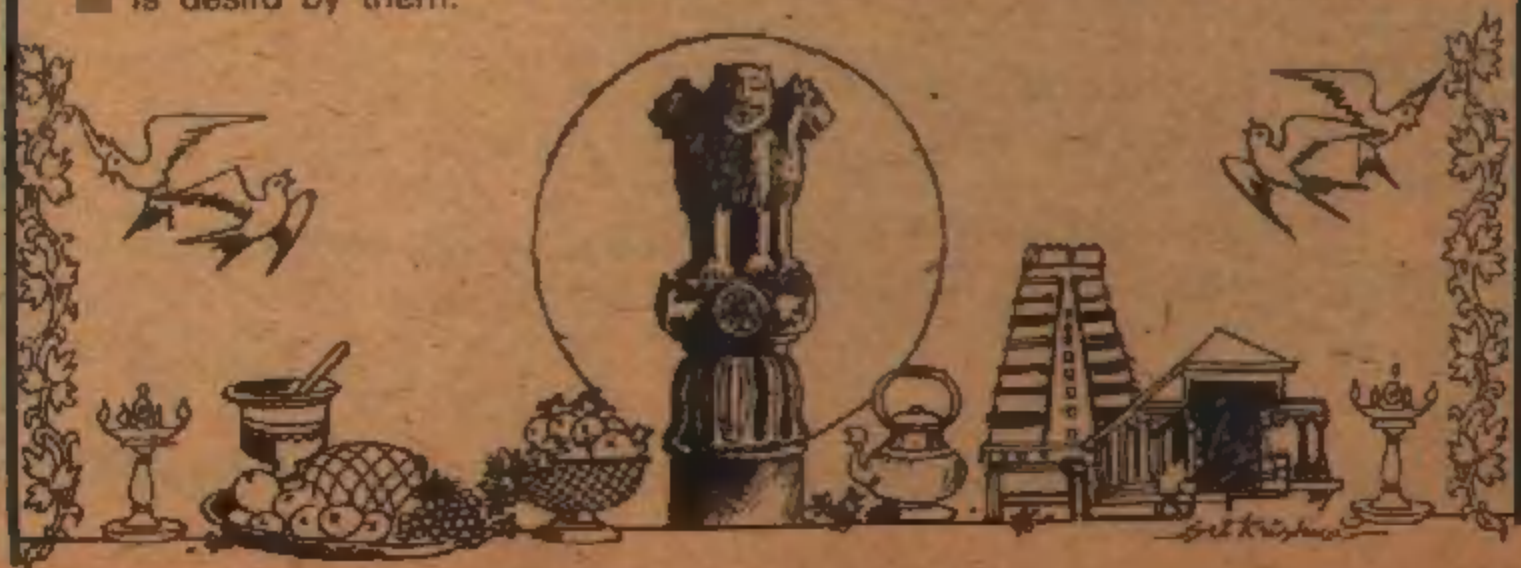
In the India of my dreams, there shall be no poverty, no ignorance, no special disabilities, no religious riots, no provincial loyalties, no military corruption. I want the future of India economically sound, socially advanced, politically stable and mature, emotionally integrated and morally upright. The future India of my dreams will be based on justice, equality, liberty with friendship and fraternity forever.

Sharada V.Joshi, Neral.

There will be no geographical, regional or social barriers. There will be no quarrels. Everywhere peace and constructive activity will reign supreme. No one will be poor and exploited. There will be God's plenty for all in the form of excellent food, clothing and shelter. Everyone will be literate, well-employed and prosperous.

Rema pillai, Calcutta.

I also dream of an India, where women get a higher position in society. Women, constituting about 50% of our population, play a very important role. Yet, in spite of movements like women's lib and so on, Indian women do not get as much freedom as is desired by them.



THREE GRAVES IN A SCHOOL

—By Khwaja Ahmed Abbas

You see or hear of a bicycle race, ■ car-race, ■ horse-race, so on and so forth. But as a child K.A. Abbas had heard of a race between a Sultan riding an elephant and... Well, he has never forgotten the anecdote. He remembers it along with his sweet moments as a child at the historic Panipat.

K.A. Abbas is one of India's foremost authors (writing in English, Urdu and Hindi) and film-makers.

I am sure you have heard of my birth place. The town of 25,000 (now it is nearly two lakhs) is mentioned in all history books---as the three Battles of Panipat are ■ part of history. You cannot pass your Indian History examination without knowing the chronology of the three battles of Panipat.

The first memories of my childhood are of three marble graves on which, in the Recess,

we would climb to revolve our tops and, if not tops, then ripe and un-ripe berries that would revolve just as well.

Our first ancestor who came to Panipat in the reign of Ghiyasuddin Balban from Herat on the Afghan-Soviet border was Khwaja Malik Ali. He was ■ great scholar of Arabic and Persian, and the king immediately gave him some land (free from revenues) in Panipat, and





appointed him the Qazi of Panipat. The office has been reduced to performing weddings now, but at that time he was the local Magistrate and held wide temporal and secular functions and duties. He was the local Power.

One of the first [redacted] to be entrusted to the new Qazi of Panipat was the case of heresy against ■ Sufi saint, Bu Ali Shah *Qalander*.

He was accused of heretical words and actions by some fanatics of Panipat. It was said that he used farcical and disrespectful words about God whom he described as his beloved. That

was in keeping with ■ Sufi ritual which treated God as a "beloved" and showered all kinds of endearments upon him. That is why the death of a Sufi saint is celebrated ■ "wedding" with the Supreme Being; at least his soul has merged with (or married to) the Infinite God. That is why the death anniversary of ■ saint is called his "*Urus*" (Marriage).

The Qazi who had come to India, and having journeyed through Iran was conversant with Sufi traditions and rituals, gave a clean chit to the Sufi saint and declared him ■ Man of God—though, according to popular belief, he was supposed to be the demented one (*Qalander*). That is why five hundred years after his death, he is still known as *Qalander Saheb*.

Our school was housed ■ one of the many pavillions in the vast courtyard of his mausoleum. That is why it was called "Qalander Saheb Ka School".

It was in the shadow of the tomb of the Sufi saint, with graves as our playtime companions, that we passed ■ childhood.

The phenomenal veneration that Bu Ali Shah, in his life and

even more so after his death, inspired among both Hindus and Muslims of Panipat and the surrounding towns and villages illustrates the great emotional and spiritual hold the Sufi saints had acquired over the local population.

The sufis are no propagandists and are not known to have converted any substantial number of Hindus, but they established a spiritual communion with the local people and revealed to them the softer, subtler and more acceptable, face of Islam. It is interesting to note that the legends that have grown about them, through the ages, are substantially the same that are current about the contemporary saints of the Bhakti cult in other parts of India.

For instance, it is said of Sant Tukaram that to teach a lesson to an arrogant local ruler, he ordered a wall to fly in the air. Likewise, it is said that Bu Ali Shah, dressed in rags as usual, was one day basking in the winter sun on a broken-down wall, when the Sultan of Delhi went past, mounted on a richly decorated elephant. "Greetings, Bu Ali Shah Qalander," said the king who had heard so much about the "mad" saint.



The saint did not reply.

The king was furious. He said something to the effect, "Eh, you beggar, can't you see that the king is condescending to speak to you, though he sits on top of an elephant?"

The saint looked up and replied, "Arrogant king, so proud of your elephant! But, if God so wills, this dead and broken wall will walk faster than your elephant."

And, legend has it, the wall did start moving forward, outpaced the elephant, and only then, beholding this miracle, the king dismounted and fell at the feet of the saint.

Every year, the *Urus* (Wedding) of Qalander Saheb was celebrated with great enthusiasm. It was more like a fair. A whole (but temporary) market would be established in the vast courtyard, and there would be shops and stalls selling spicy snacks; and sweet and cool *sherbet* and *faalooda*. There would also be shops selling toys—colourful mud dolls, clowns that beat cymbals, white horses and green parrots. Much cloth was also on display including Japanese artificial silk which was quite cheap though it shimmered in its golden and silvery glory. There would also be hand-woven cotton cloth which was locally produced but could not compete with the glamour of the foreign textiles.

At night there would be *qawwalis* about the Prophet or the

Sufi saints, and were intoned with accompaniment of rhythmic drums, and cymbals, and iron bangles which were worn by fakirs, who could beat time by shaking their wrists rhythmically.

And, often, someone—a sufi or a layman or medicant—would respond to the *qawwali* by *haal*, or ecstatic movements of the head or the whole body, which swayed to and fro, and even danced to the rhythm of the *qawwali*. Like the dancing dervishes of Iran, the men would dance and every one would be in awe of the man and his ecstasy. The singers would sing with extra vigour, the hand-clapping would beat out the faster and faster rhythms and the 'holy' dancer would whirl till he collapsed on the marble floor in a state of unconsciousness.



Krishna

—By Manoj Das

(Story ■ far: Princess Devaki was married to Vasudev. A prophecy warned Kamsa, the demoniac king of Mathura, that her eighth child shall bring about his death. He imprisoned both Devaki and her husband in an apartment of his castle and killed their first child as soon ■ it was born.)

3. BIRTH OF THE ■ CHILD

People of Mathura heard with awe and amazement what Kamsa did!

It was a sad day for most of them. Many cursed their fate that they had to suffer the rule of a tyrant like Kamsa and had to bear with such shameful happenings. The sensible ones among the ministers and officers

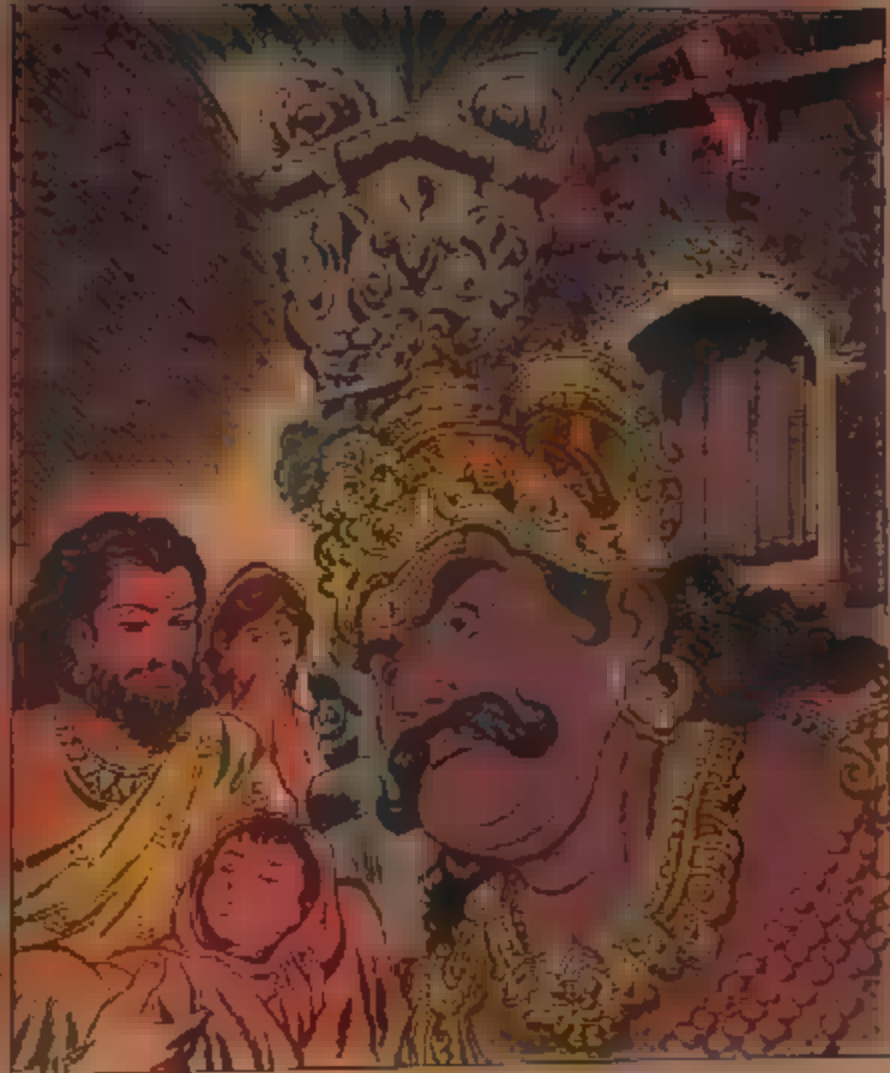
of the king walked with their heads hung.

But there were also people to feel gleeful at the tidings.

They were the wicked ones or those who had mischief in their minds. In Kamsa they found a support.

A noble deed inspires nobility in many. An evil deed encour-





ages others to do evil. And when an example is set by a king or a leader, be it good or bad, its influence is always widespread.

An atmosphere marked by tender sunlight, soothing breeze and fragrance of flowers makes one happy even when one is not conscious of these elements. One feels depressed when the atmosphere is damp or foul. Similarly in an atmosphere dominated by goodwill, compassion and trust, virtues lying hidden in people flourish.

If violence, greed and selfish ambition become prominent, many tend to grow mean.

Kamsa's action in killing De-

vaki's child vitiated the atmosphere of the country. There were weak-minded kings for whom Kamsa was a model. If he could do as he liked, throwing the norms of healthy behaviour to the winds, why should they hesitate going the same way?

However, one good result of the prophecy was, Kamsa spent most of his time brooding over his ~~own~~ fate. Fear of the mysterious foe yet to be born damped his enthusiasm for going out to harass his innocent subjects or humiliate the sages.

Devaki and 'Vosudev' continued to live as prisoners. Vosudey had some freedom of movement, but Devaki had none. Kamsa persisted in his brutality. He went on destroying their children, one after another, year after year.

It became a sinister ritual with him: he will snatch the child from Devaki, hurry to the courtyard and, holding the child by its legs, raise it high and dash it on a stone. While most of the inmates of the palace shunned the sight, Kamsa nevertheless had a group of sycophants and toadies to cheer him.

Devaki conceived for the seventh time. It became known to the couple in their dreams

that a great soul was to be born. Devaki was anxious to protect it from Kamsa's wrath. But there was nobody to whom she could look for any help. Her ardent prayer went to the Divine Mother.

Vosudev had married Devaki because his first wife, Rohini, was childless. Rohini's prayer for a child and Devaki's for saving the child in her womb were granted in one stroke. An emanation of the Divine Mother, Mahamaya—capable of wondrous performances—came down and transferred the child from Devaki's womb to that of Rohini. The child—later to be famous as Balaram—grew in the safety of the house of King Nanda, a dear friend of Vosudev, in the beautiful village, Braja, across the Yamuna.

Kamsa was informed by Devaki's maids that the child died in the womb at an early stage. Kamsa made enquiries and saw no reason to doubt the report.

A year or so later the maids reported to Kamsa of Princess Devaki expecting yet another child. The news gave him the creeps. For this was going to be the dreaded eighth issue of Devaki!

At the same time he found



some solace in the thought that once this child is destroyed, he will be free from all anxieties.

Day by day he grew more and more tense. At last when the maids told him that the day was not far for the child to be born, Kamsa found himself trembling, caught in the grip of a terror. Time and again he would cross the corridor to Devaki's apartment and prick his ears to hear if an infant's cry was heard. He replaced the human guards by those recruited from a demon horde—more trusted by him. Their vigil over the apartment never slackened.

It was the eighth day of the



dark fortnight of the month of Bhadra, a Wednesday.

Kamsa was pacing up and down the corridor in the evening when a maid bowed down to him and said, "My lord, the princess is likely to give birth to her child tonight."

"Is that so?" asked Kamsa, passing a searching look over the maid. Suddenly he grew suspicious of all the maids attending upon Devaki. Who knows if they are not won over by her? Who knows if they had not lied to him regarding Devaki's seventh issue—whisking the child away and telling him that it was a case of miscarriage?

"No maid is to attend upon Devaki tonight," he roared out his order. He stomped into Devaki's apartment to ensure that it had been cleared of all but Vosudev.

And he ordered the demon guards to knock on his bed-chamber the moment they heard a cry!

A dark—dark night was descending on Mathura. Mammoth clouds looking like floating hills jammed the sky. Even the tiniest of stars found no chink for a peep. A strong wind invaded Kamsa's castle raising a thousand howls and whistles.

Inside their apartment Devaki and Vosudev were in deep agony. The flickering lamp showed Devaki's face growing pale with increasing pain. Vosudev paced round her bed, feeling utterly distressed.

"If my child is to play any role in fulfilling the will of Providence, the Grace of the Divine Mother must take charge of the situation. She alone can come to our rescue," said Devaki. Hers was a poignant prayer, marked by a total faith in the Divine.

An erratic gust of wind suddenly extinguished the lamp. It was the darkest hour of the night.

Vosudev closed his eyes in prayer. Next moment he felt as though a heatless fire flashed in the room. He opened his eyes and saw it to be true: ■ bluish golden light had replaced the darkness.

Soon a charming form emerged from the light. Vosudev had a vision of Mahamaya.

"Take your son in your arms!" said the emanation of the Divine Mother.

"Son?" Vosudev looked back. Close to Devaki, who had fallen into a stupor, lay her eighth child—luminous and divinely charming.

"At once proceed to the palace of King Nanda. Just now his queen, Yasoda, has given birth to ■ female child. Exchange your child with theirs and return forthwith," said the

emanation.

Vosudev took up the child in his trembling hands. He was in ecstasy at its touch. No artist could have painted a portrait that could surpass this child in beauty. Vosudev found it difficult to take his eyes off it.

"But, Mother ..." He fumbled out his doubts about his ability to go out of Kamsa's castle.

"Don't you worry on that account," said Mahamaya. "All the guards and inmates of the castle—in fact all the people of Mathura—are now plunged in an unconscious sleep. My *Maya* has done it. Proceed without fear!"

With the child held close to his bosom, Vosudev bowed to Mahamaya and looked at the locked doors.

At once the door flung open.





Towards ■ Brighter Personality

DO NOT ADDRESS CABBAGES AND CAULIFLOWERS!

Are you sure that it is national integrity and not national integration?"

"You've confused me!" murmured Rajesh. He opened a notebook and, after ■ hurried glance into it, said, "You're right. I had bungled it up. It is national integration. But it is the same thing, isn't it?"

"No. Integrity is an individual trait. I don't think national integrity will make a natural phrase. National integration? Yes. This idea is very much in the air. It should be so. We Indians, belonging to different linguistic, regional and cultural groups, must realise how to live harmoniously as a nation. But how is it that you're not sure of your subject and yet you are ready to speak?" The grandpa took Rajesh to task.

"Well, grandpa," Rajesh said, not without some embar-

Grandpa, will you please tell me something about national integrity? We are having a debate on the subject," Rajesh said, while putting on socks.

"Are you going to participate in it? Are you prepared?" asked Prof. Chowdhury.

"Look at me. Do I look unprepared?" asked Rajesh, springing up before Prof. Chowdhury smartly. No doubt, he was well-dressed.

"I mean, are you prepared to speak on the topic?"

"I'm in the process. That's why I ask you to give ■ some ideas."

rassment. "I had no time to prepare. But teachers and friends will insist on my speaking. I always stand first in debates. They like my style of speaking."

"If they like your style, that is more the reason why your speech should be sound in content. A well-informed talk delivered in good style is ideal. Next to that, I will prefer substance without style to style without substance."

"But must one be so careful about these things? How much attention does the audience pay to talks?" argued Rajesh.

"That depends. If the speaker commands respect for some reason or the other, people will hear him whether he speaks well or not. So far as we are concerned, how much attention we will command will depend on

how well we speak. But I tell you, speaking well is not merely speaking in style, but speaking sense."

"I read in a book that a speaker should take the audience to be made of cabbages and cauliflowers and go on fearlessly," observed Rajesh.

"Fearlessly, yes, but you've no right to view your audience as cabbages and cauliflowers. They are giving you their time. Either speak sense or don't speak at all. Do you understand?"

Rajesh nodded. "The debate will spread over two Saturdays. I think I should take my turn next time, after preparing well."

"That's good. Only seers and yogis can speak without preparing—by deriving inspiration directly from above, not you and I."



THE PITY

A drunkard who had borrowed a certain amount of money from a money-lender did not pay it back as promised. Every time the money-lender came to his house, the drunkard's servant told him, "My master is not at home!"

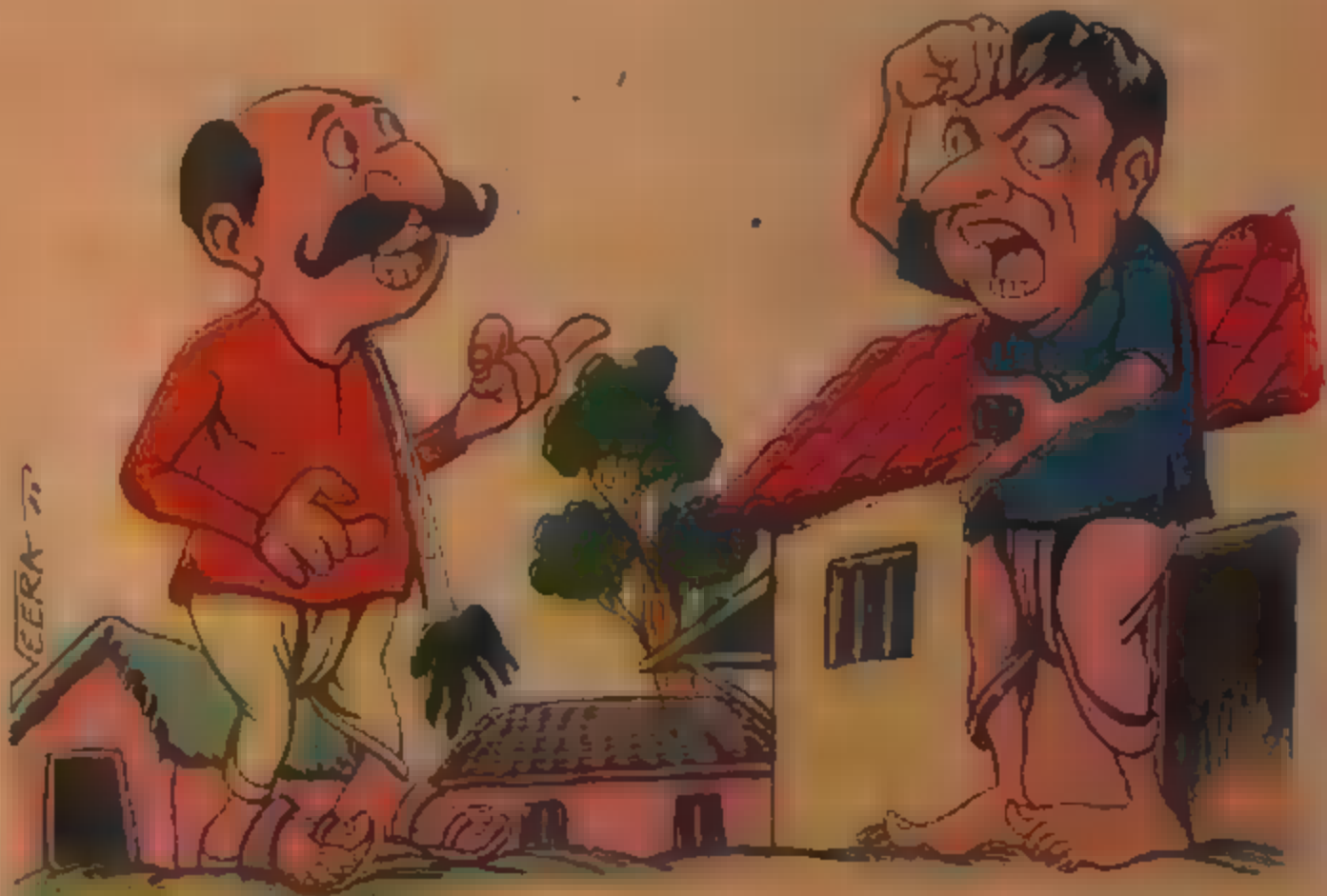
One day, on yet another visit, the money-lender saw the man at his door-step. He came running before the man had disappeared into his house.

"At last, gentleman, I found you!" exclaimed the money-lender. "Every time your servant informs me that you are not at home!"

"I am not home!" said the drunkard, trying to be steady.

"What! Don't I see you myself?" shouted the money-lender.

"This is the pity. You believe what my servant says about me, but you don't believe when I say it myself!" howled out the drunkard beating his hand on his forehead.



THE SECRET CHAMBER

—By Randor Guy

King Parakram stared at the vacant golden throne in his private chamber. Restless, he paced the carpeted floor alone. It was a room with a low ceiling and the walls were covered with exquisite paintings. Carved lamps made of gold were fixed onto the wall at many places. The chamber had no windows, for it was the secret chamber of the king in which he used to have confidential meetings with his ministers and close relatives and friends. His per-

sonal bodyguard, a deaf and mute man named Lamba, would stand behind him and fan him with a large fan made of swans-down and roots of a fragrant plant possessing air-purifying properties. That morning even the bodyguard was not on duty. The king did not need him, for he was in an extremely disturbed state of mind.

Sidhanta walked in and bowed to the king and gazed at his face for a few moments. His hands dug into his beard, ■ sign



of his mind working at great pace.

"Your Majesty, something surely worries you! I don't see Lamba and his swansdown fan and your left eye-brow is not steady!" Sidhanta asked the king.

"Dear Sidhanta, you guess rightly. I am very much perturbed! That's why I sent for you so urgently."

"Beloved King, pray, unwind your mind and your servant is all set to help you to the best of his ability."

"Sidhanta, you are not a servant, but a friend and, of course, my minister too. Listen,

a disturbing situation has arisen, and I want you to unravel it all. Here is a spy in the palace. Some clever fellow has succeeded in overhearing confidential matters discussed in this secret chamber!"

"Your Majesty," Sidhanta exclaimed, surprise charging his voice, "I just can't believe it! How can anybody overhear what goes on here?"

"That's the puzzle. You know, Sumantra, the feudal chief of Sujanpur has not been paying the tribute due to us in gold, silver, and diamonds for quite some time."

"Your Majesty, but for your



friendship. Sumantra would have lost his principality long ago to King Bimbadhar of Vidisha! Of course the gold, silver and diamonds of Sujanpur will tempt any king but you to try to conquer Sujanpur. Sorry, please go on," Sidhanta pulled at his beard again.

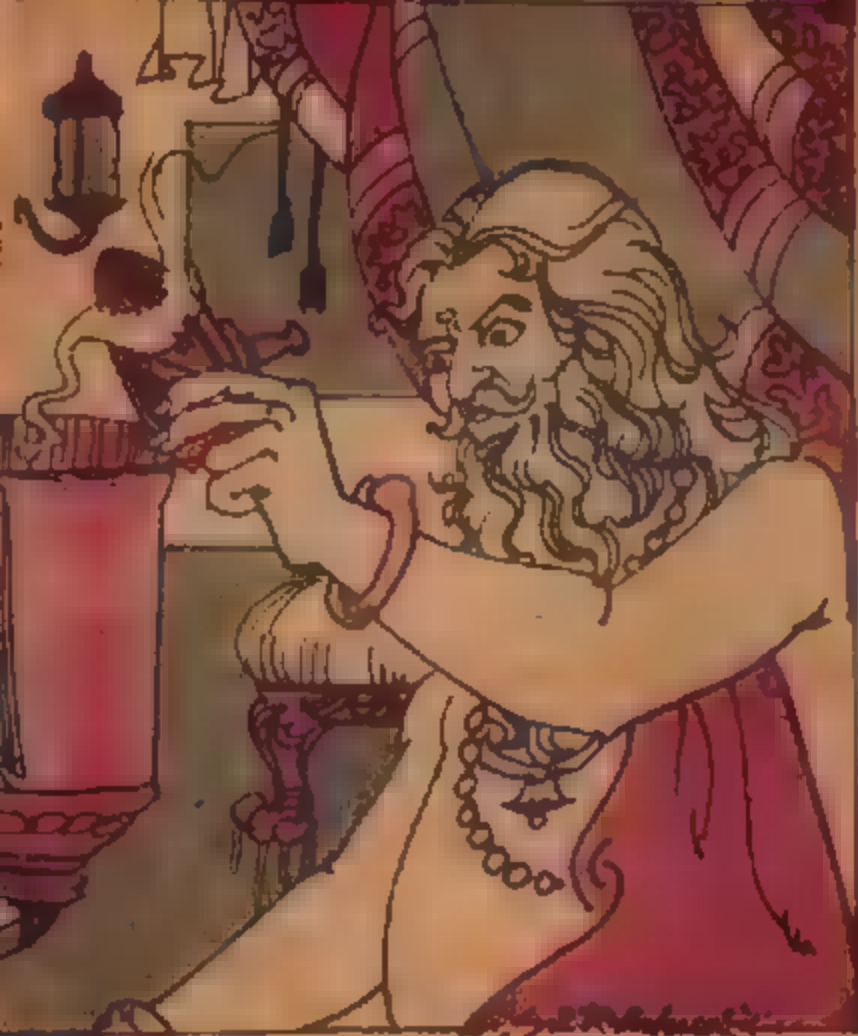
"I and our Chief Minister Bhaskara discussed the affair in this chamber. Sumantra has been behaving badly; he never replies to our messages and the tribute remains unpaid, etc. We decided to send a final warning to that arrogant chap, asking him to send what is due to Mallipuram or else to prepare

for our taking over his gold mines to realise our dues! Now we have learnt that Sumantra has full knowledge of the secret discussion and he seems to be ready to even defy us! How did he know what transpired in this secret chamber? He does not have such long ears, Sidhanta!"

"The only answer is, this chamber-walls have ears."

"Sounds impossible, Sidhanta! If it is true, it is a great security risk to our kingdom — something we cannot and should not bear with! Sidhanta, I want you to find out who is responsible for the mischief. Who? Find him and we shall





punish him for treason. Please do it fast. Till you find us the answer, we cannot rest in peace!" said the king, his voice tense.

Sidhaanta stood alone in the secret chamber, his eyes leisurely surveying the walls, carpets, paintings, and the lamps of gold. Somewhere there, he told himself, there is a chink through which someone, smart and quick in the uptake, had eavesdropped on the discussion between the king and Bhaskara. Who was that? A man or a woman? Palace workers were known for their utmost loyalty. Now the king had reason to complain of even treason!

Slowly he walked, gazing at the gold lamps, one by one. The lamps were lit by vegetable oil, and the task of lighting them rested in a maid named Ambika. She was known for her agility and fastness in doing her work. Sidhanta recalled her lighting the chamber lamps silently and softly, moving without noise.

He stood before a lamp fixed to the eastern wall, the one that was at a lower level than the other lamps. He smiled. He knew all about that lamp and also why it was at a different level. Gently, he bent low, and without touching the lamp, he sniffed at it. His fingers moved to his beard! And then he saw a trace of soot, a thin dark line inside the lamp. His smile broadened!

He looked around for something he had on his mind but he could not find it. His mind racing fast, he went out and returned in a few minutes, holding it in his hand. A pair of flint stones that used to make fire! Under a low sandalwood table there was a silver vessel filled with oil. He took it out, and walked towards the lamp. Now he was almost laughing!

Half-an-hour later, he was

seated before the king who in a glum mood. A bowl of fresh fruit lay untouched by the king.

"Your Majesty, I think I know how the walls of our secret chamber grew ears. You know the lamp, the one that is at a lower level. That had been lit!"

The king perked up his ears and sat upright on his pearl-studded throne. "What do you mean? That lamp is not meant to be lit except in an emergency! You know why it is there. don't you?"

"I know, but it has been lit recently. The lamp smells of burnt oil, and I saw a thin trail

of soot on the lamp. My lord, you know what that means!"

"Of course, Sidhanta, I do. When that special lamp is lit, the heat melts the ball of wax concealed at the back of the lamp in the wall and when the wax melts, a secret door opens up, leading to a secret passage that ends in a cave in Mallivana. Oh, don't tell me that somebody in the palace had found out all about the lamp, the wax ball, the secret door!"

"Dear King, I request you to summon another meeting with our learned Bhaskara. Both of you should meet in our secret chamber as usual. Let the infor-



mation about your meeting be known in the palace and I shall do the rest. Your Majesty may order the lamps to be lit for the meeting and hold the meeting at a late hour after sunset." Sidhanta stroked his beard with a smile.

Dusk had fallen and darkness began to spread fast in Mallivanna, while Sidhanta and Kedara, with their men, waited near the cave, hiding themselves behind high bushes and plants. Their eyes never left the cave and then a soldier nudged Sidhanta. All were now alert, and soon they saw a woman slowly sneaking out of the cave!

Sidhanta's men surprised the person. As Sidhanta had suspected from the person's build and gait, it was found to be a man in a woman's guise!

Kedara held a flaming torch close to his face. He recognised the man, the culprit, Avinash, the maid Ambika's brother.

"So, it's you, Avinash!" cried out Sidhanta.

Later Avinash confessed before the king. Ambika had been recently assigned the duty of lighting lamps in the palace and as part of her duty she had gone to light the lamps in the secret chamber where the king and the chief minister were to meet on



the earlier occasion. She had not been told not to light the low lamp on the eastern wall. Unaware of the secret behind that lamp, she lit it and was most surprised when the ball of wax at the back melted in the heat and a secret door opened up. She peeped inside and saw the secret passage. Quickly she shut the door as tight as she could, and ran to inform her brother Avinash. He was taken aback, and soon an idea was born in his mind. Quickly he hid himself behind that door and overheard all the confidential conversation between the King and the Chief Minister. Being wicked by nature he made up his mind to convey the valuable secret to Sumantra for a price. His

mother hailed from Sujanpur and he knew many officers of that tiny kingdom. Sumantra had given him gold and silver for his services, and asked him to inform him whenever anything of interest took place in that secret chamber!

Avinash tried and was found guilty of treason. According to law he was to lose his life. But the king took pity on him as his forefathers had been in the service of the royal dynasty. He was banished from Mallipuram. The secret passage had to be closed down, for it was no longer secret. The king asked Sidhanta to devise another way to link a chamber with a faraway spot for use in an emergency by the members of the royal family.



NATURE'S KINGDOM

COUNTING THE YEARS

Establishing the age to which animals live is the easiest task

Captain James Cook, the adventurous 18th Century navigator, visited the Southern Pacific island of Tonga in 1773. As a gesture of friendship, he presented the island's king with a tortoise, to which the Tongans gave the name Tui Malela.

In 1966, Tui Malela died at an age of over 200. This record lacks proper documentation. But if it is correct, the Tongan tortoise led a long, if uneventful, life.

As a general rule, however, few creatures live longer than man, whose greatest age is 110, though the average is nearer 70.

Man's closest rival is the tortoise, which holds the record for long life among the vertebrates. A male Galapagos tortoise has lived to become 152 and a European pond tortoise more than 120.

Birds have far shorter lives. One sulphur-crested cockatoo was known to have lived for 56 years. Another record, listed as "probable," gives an age of 73 for a greater sulphur-crested cockatoo. This Australasian bird is a member of the parrot family. An owl reached the age of 68 and an ostrich survived until it was 45.

A male Andean condor attained the age of 72. A herring gull ringed in the nest was proved to have lived for 36 years, while the record for a swift is 21 years. Other records are: swallow, 18 years; blue tit, 11 years; willow warbler, 5 years. The average life-span, however, is in every case very much shorter.

Predators help to limit the lives of the birds, a hazard which they share with the fishes. Nevertheless, some fishes have achieved remarkable ages, such as a lake sturgeon which was estimated by its growth rings to be 154. There is an unauthenticated record of a pike surviving for 262 years, although it is known that 50 years would be nearer to the unusual maximum age.

In comparison with these figures, mammals are not very long-lived. The record for a horse is 62. Whales seldom exceed 50, although some

have reached the age of 90. Although elephants rarely live beyond 50, there are exceptions, such as 70 years for a bull timber elephant in captivity. African elephants have lived over 80 years. Even older was a blue killer whale called Old Tom who was spotted every winter in an Australian bay from 1843 to 1930.

VETERAN TERMITES

Growth rings in the ear-plugs of other blue whale specimens have also indicated life-spans of about a century.

In the insect world, the queen termite has an egg-laying span of half a century. Close behind must come the cicada. It is known as the "seventeen year locust" in the warmer parts of the USA and Mexico, where it lives. The nymph spends this number of years underground, feeding on the roots of plants, until it emerges and changes into a transparent-winged adult insect.

Champion among the crustaceans is the American lobster, which has a tally of 50 years. A boa constrictor attained its 40th birthday, and a giant salamander could have put 55 candles on its birthday cake, had it been able to do so.

The records do not stop here. Twentyeight years for a spider has been authenticated, and a mollusc has lived for a hundred years.

A record to beat all records, not for old age but for continuity of species, is held by a deep sea worm snail which was thought to have become extinct 320 million years ago. Specimens found in 1952 proved that it had not died.

The examination of fossils showed that it was living 500 million years ago, when these creatures must have had the world virtually to themselves.

While they settled down at the bottom of the oceans, other animals evolved, enjoying lives which grew longer and longer as the species improved over the centuries. Finally achieving the records we note with fascination today.

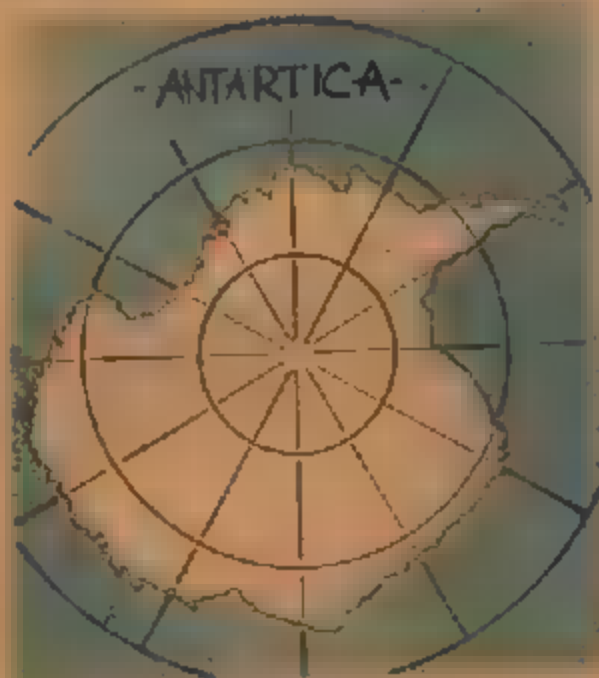
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NEWS FLASH

Lights on Antartica

Indian scientists who explored the Antartica have brought credit to their country and much food for further research by scientists the world over. Antartica is still ■ field of mystery. Only ■ few months ago American scientists discovered the first fossil of a land mammal there. The discovery shows that mammals called *Polylolops*, which carry their young in abdominal pouches and are distantly related to the kangaroos, migrated from South America to Australia by way of Antartica before the three continents drifted apart.



A Book of Gold

A real book of seven gold leaves, made about 1500 years ago, has been discovered in northern Sri Lanka. The text is in Sanskrit and gold used is valued at Rs.1000000.00.



Earth's Biggest Eye on the Sky

Eight years ago ■ optical telescope with a mirror six metres in diameter was installed in the northern Caucasus and it is the largest in the world to this day. Soon ■ mirror 25 metres in diameter will be mounted on a gigantic optical telescope which ■ being designed in the Soviet Union.



"The

Prince and the Pauper"

(Edward, Prince of Wales and Tom, a beggar boy, have changed identities but when Tom tries to explain, he is thought to be mad.)

Tom was taken before the king, Henry VIII. "They tell me that thou art mad," the king said. "What sorry jest is this?" Seeing the expression on Tom's face, his voice softened. "Dost thou not know thy father, child?" Such was Tom's fright that he could not utter a single word.



"He is indeed mad," the king said, sighing heavily. "But mad or not, he is still the Prince of Wales. Take him to his trifles and amusements, for I am weary and would rest." Heavy-hearted, Tom was conducted from his presence. He knew that he was a prisoner now and might remain for ever shut up in his gilded cage—a forlorn and friendless prince.



Later that day, Tom resignedly underwent the ordeal of being dressed for dinner. Then he was conducted with much state to a spacious and ornate apartment where a table was all ready and set for one. All those that were present had already been well drilled to remember that the prince was temporarily out of his head, and they were careful to show no surprise at his 'vagaries' which included eating with his fingers.



Tom's meal ended, a lord came in and held before him a golden dish in which to cleanse his fingers. Tom gazed at the dish a puzzled moment or two, then raised it to his lips and gravely took a draught.



By his own request, our small friend was conducted to his private cabinet, and there left alone to his devices. Hanging upon hooks in the oaken wainscoting were several pieces of shining armour. Tom put on the greaves, the gauntlets, the helmet, and such other pieces as he could don without assist-

We must now return to the prince whom we last saw being dragged along the street by Tom's father. Presently, the prince himself came to Cauty's abode. The vague light of a candle, he made out the features of this loathsome den. As Cauty pushed him into the middle of this vile place, the prince saw two frowzy gins and a middle-aged woman cowering in a corner.



"Now thou art home," snarled Cauty at the Prince. "say again that foolery. Name thy name. Who art thou?" The insulted blood rose to the little prince's cheek. "I tell thee now as I told thee before, I am Edward, Prince of Wales!"



For an answer, the prince received a heavy blow which sent him staggering into the arms of Tom's mother. "The poor boy!" his mother cried. "His foolish reading has wrought its woeful effect at last and taken his wits away. Let him rest and may be a sleep will heal his madness."



"Very well," Caryl said, proudly. "To sea, all of ye." The light was put out and the family retired. Lying between her sags, Tom's mother looked across at the prince lying on his bed of straw, and as she looked at him, a sudden thought came to her. What if the boy was not really her son after all? But that was absurd. In the darkness opposite her, the prince was crying silently. Like Tom, he, too, was now a prisoner in a world to which he did not belong.

The next morning the prince had been sneaked away from the ladies' chamber where he was now kept to live with Tom's father. He made his way out of the gates of the palace where he demanded entrance. A crowd gathered and began to taunt and mock him. "I believe I am the prince of Wales," he cried, shouted the Prince.



Finally a man pushed his way through the crowd. His clothes had once been rich, but were now threadbare. "Prince of no Prince, thou art a gallant lad, and not friendless either now thou hast Miles Hendon by thy side."



This [redacted] received by [redacted] explosion of jeers and laughter. "Pluck the [redacted] from him and throw him in the horse pond!" The man who had spoken laid a hand upon the Prince, and instantly [redacted] stranger's sword was [redacted], and [redacted] meddler went to the ground with a resounding thump as he [redacted] dealt a heavy blow from the [redacted] of the blade.

"Kill the dog! Kill him!" voices shouted. The mob closed in [redacted] the warrior who began [redacted] lay about him like a madman. His victims sprawled this way and that, but the mob still came forward. His moments seemed num- [redacted], his destruction certain.



Suddenly a trumpet blast sounded, and a voice shouted "Make way for the King's Messenger!" [redacted] troop of horsemen came charging down [redacted] [redacted] mob [redacted] bugle [redacted] sounded and there [redacted] instant silence. Then a single [redacted] rose, that [redacted] a messenger. "The King's dead," [redacted] announced.



WISDOM DOES NOT WIN

Two foxes, one old and the other young, went in quest of adventure at night.

They left their forest behind and entered a village. Peeping into the compounds and houses of different villagers, they stopped near a fence.

"Look what is there on the other side," the old fox told the young one.

The young fox thrust his head through the fence and saw a hen-roost. Its door had been left open carelessly. The family to

which the fowls belonged was away in another village, attending a function.

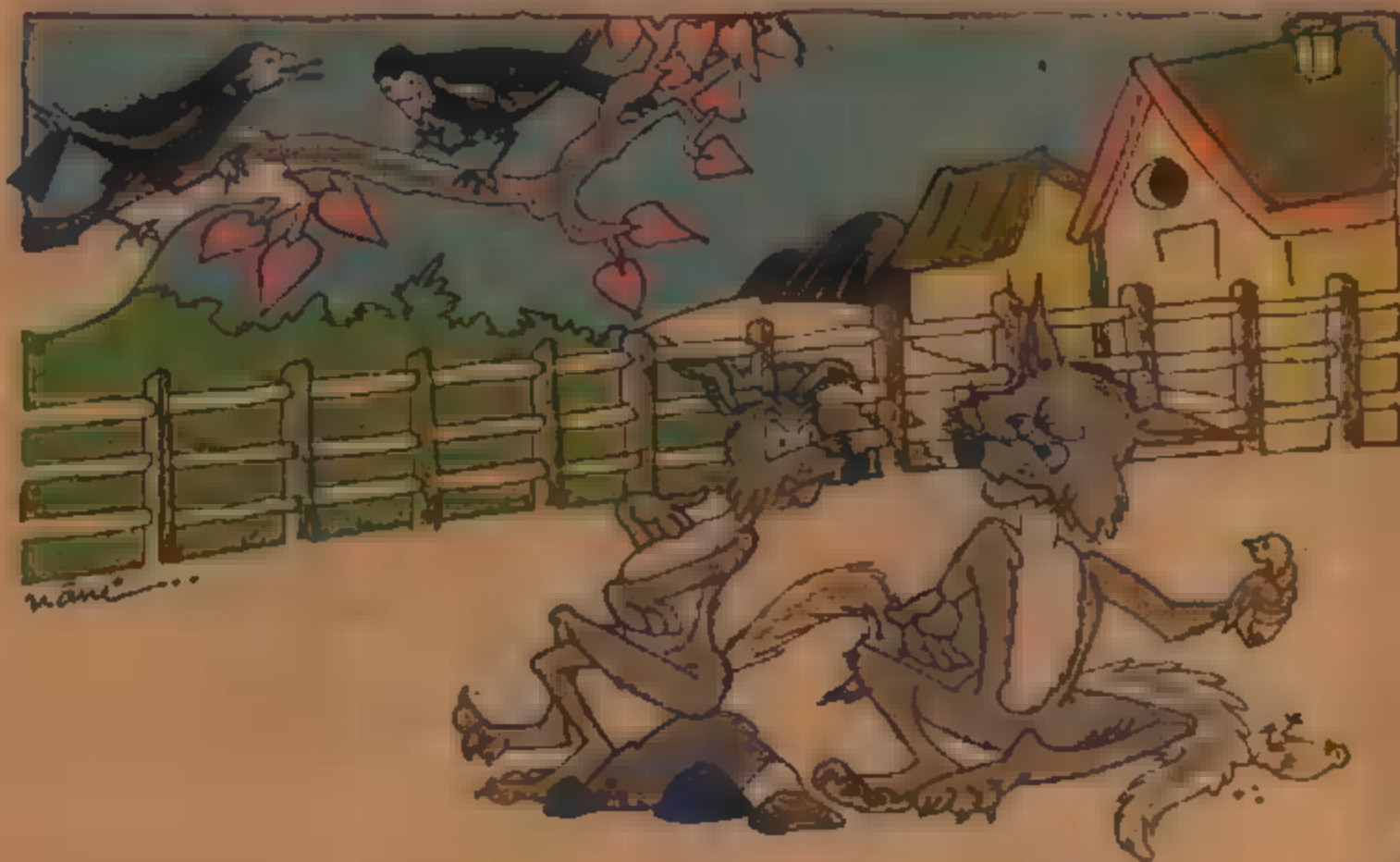
The foxes began killing and eating the fowls.

"Let us finish all," suggested the young fox.

"No, no, we can leave some for tomorrow," said the old one.

A young crow on the tree that heard their dialogue asked a grown-up crow, "Who between the two is wise?"

"Both are unwise, child! Being thieves, both are on a wrong course. How can wisdom



be with them? Both shall have deplorable consequences of their actions," said the older crow.

The two foxes argued for some more time, but one could not win the other to his point of view. At last they divided the fowls equally between them. Each was at liberty to do whatever he wished with his share of fowls.

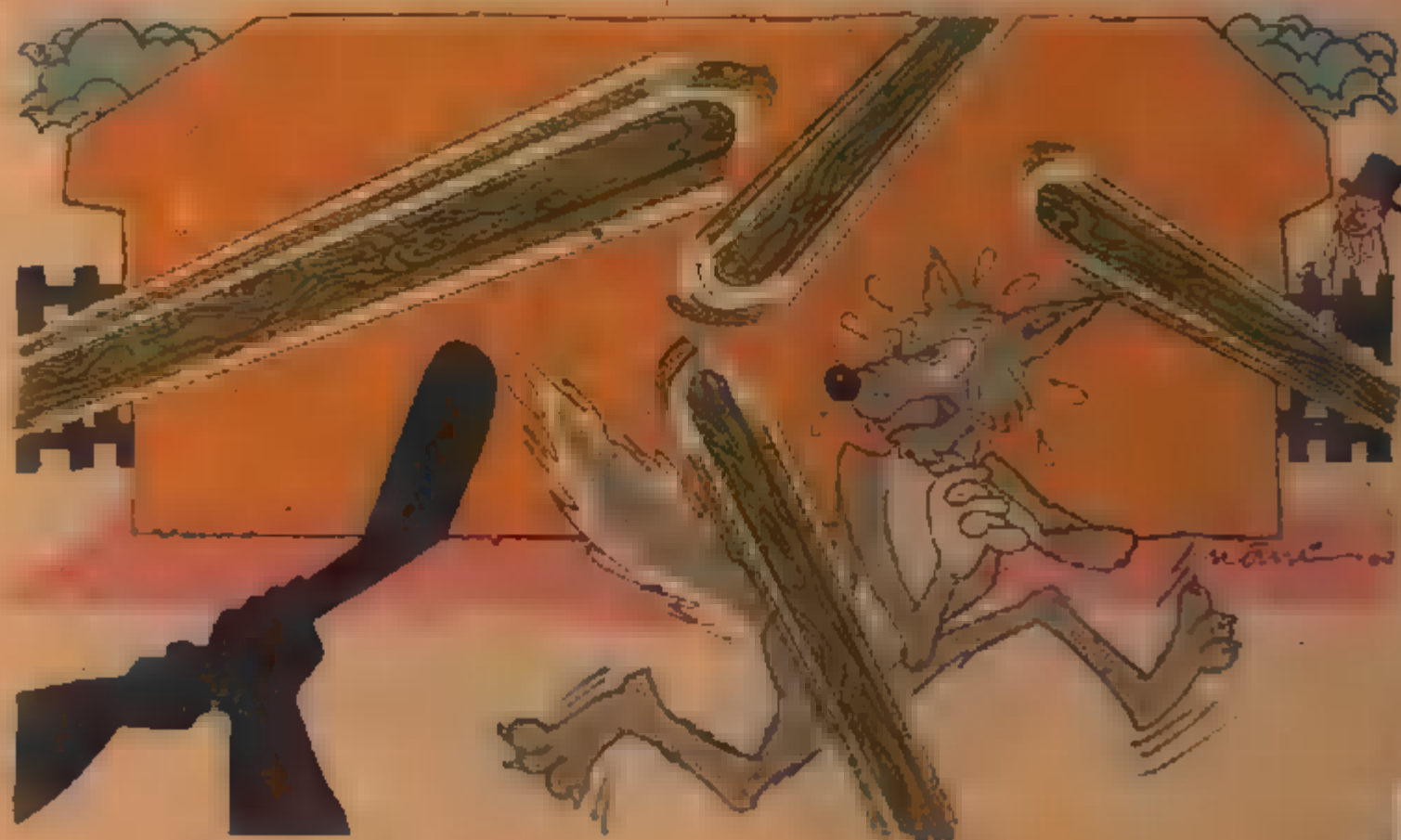
The old fox ate only half of his share. The young fox ate all the fowls that fell into his share. Both left, but the young one, grown extremely heavy with his weight, could not enter his hole. He felt choked and he died.

The old fox observed the

young fox's condition and congratulated himself for having eaten only half of his share.

The two crows marked the death of the young fox. "Wait and see what happens to the other," the older crow told the young crow. Next night the old fox entered the hen-roost again. The owners of the fowls had been back. They were expecting the rogue that had destroyed much of their fowls. As soon as the fox stepped into the hen-roost his legs were caught in a gin. He was struggling to get them free when blows from sticks flattened him.

"Did you see?" the older crow asked the young one.



THE ARCH-MISER

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind howled and jackals moaned. Between these sounds was heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. Then, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, the vampire that had possessed the corpse spoke. "O King, I wonder if it is not out of a mere whim that you are taking such pains. Nobody can deny the fact that kings can be quite whimsical. Take the instance of King Chandrasen of Vajrapuri. Let me narrate to you ■■■ incident concerning him. Pay attention to it. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: Like many of the kings of the olden days, King Chandrasen was in the habit of visiting places in his



kingdom donning a disguise. One night he reached a village and knocked on a door.

"What do you want, gentleman?" ■ man coming from behind him, asked him. He held a stick and a lantern and from his appearance it was obvious that he was the village watchman.

"I'm a traveller, seeking shelter for the night," said the king.

"Gentleman, in that case don't waste your time here. This man is an arch-miser and he is not likely to oblige you," warned the watchman.

"I am not going to beg of him anything. He may be a miser. What would he lose by allowing

me to sleep on his floor?" asked the king.

"He is not only miserly, but also mean. He won't let his floor benefit someone else. Better move over to some other house," advised the watchman.

"Well, well, let me see under what pretext he refuses me shelter," said the king. The watchman went away on his round.

At repeated knocks from the king the miser opened his door. The king saluted him and said, "I've heard from others how kind and generous you are. You'll surely not grudge me shelter for a night."

"Gentleman, you've heard wrong. I'm not the person to grant shelter to anybody!" the miser told the disguised king bluntly.

The king brought out a silver coin from his pocket and handed it over to the miser. The frown disappeared from the miser's face. He signalled the king to enter the house, but said, "Sleep you may, but I can provide you with no food."

The king brought out another coin from his pocket and gave it to the man and asked him to buy food for both of them.

The man went out and returned with not only food but

also another traveller. He gave the traveller his own share of food and took money from him.

After the traveller left, the king asked him. "I meant you to have food with me. Why did you sell it to another?"

"If I eat much, I'll fall soundly asleep. Who will guard my wealth?" answered the miser.

In the morning the king introduced himself to his host. The miser stood speechless fearing some punishment from the king. But the king smiled and said. "I've never known another man so fond of hoarding wealth. If you accompany me to my palace, I'll give you a thousand times more than what you have. Of course, you must pass a certain test to prove that you are the greatest miser in my kingdom."

The miser agreed to the condition. He followed the king after locking up his house.

At the palace the king told his minister, "We conduct several contests. What about a contest to determine the greatest miser in our kingdom?"

"My lord, won't that be a futile exercise?" asked the minister.

"Not at all. Announce the contest and wait and see," said



the king.

The contest was announced. Twenty fellows claiming themselves to be ardent misers reported for the contest. The king held a bagful of gold coins before them and said, "Anyone of you can come forward and hold it. Others will beg of him who holds it a coin or two from it. The fellow holding ■ will be whipped twentyfive times if he does not give ■ single coin to anybody. If he gives, he loses the prize, but is spared of the whipping. Those who will beg will be whipped once each if they don't succeed in getting even ■ coin from the holder of the bag."



Each one tried to hold the bag unopened while he was whipped. But none could bear more than three or four whips. They opened the bag and gave coins to the others and saved their skins from the fury of the whip.

At last came the turn of the miser who had come with the king. He stood holding the bag tight, ready to be whipped. But none of the other misers came forward to beg of him. "It is easier to squeeze water out of a stone than to extract a coin from him," they said in a chorus.

Naturally he won the contest and was declared the arch-miser.

The king led him to a room in the palace in which was deposited a number of valuable heirlooms; golden throne, jewelled sceptre, diamond-studded old crowns, silver bedsteads, etc. The arch-miser ran amidst them touching them with great excitement.

"From today all this is yours!" said the king. The arch-miser at first could not believe his ears. Then he smiled and prostrated himself to the king.

"What do you propose to do with them? Will you like to carry them home?" asked the king.

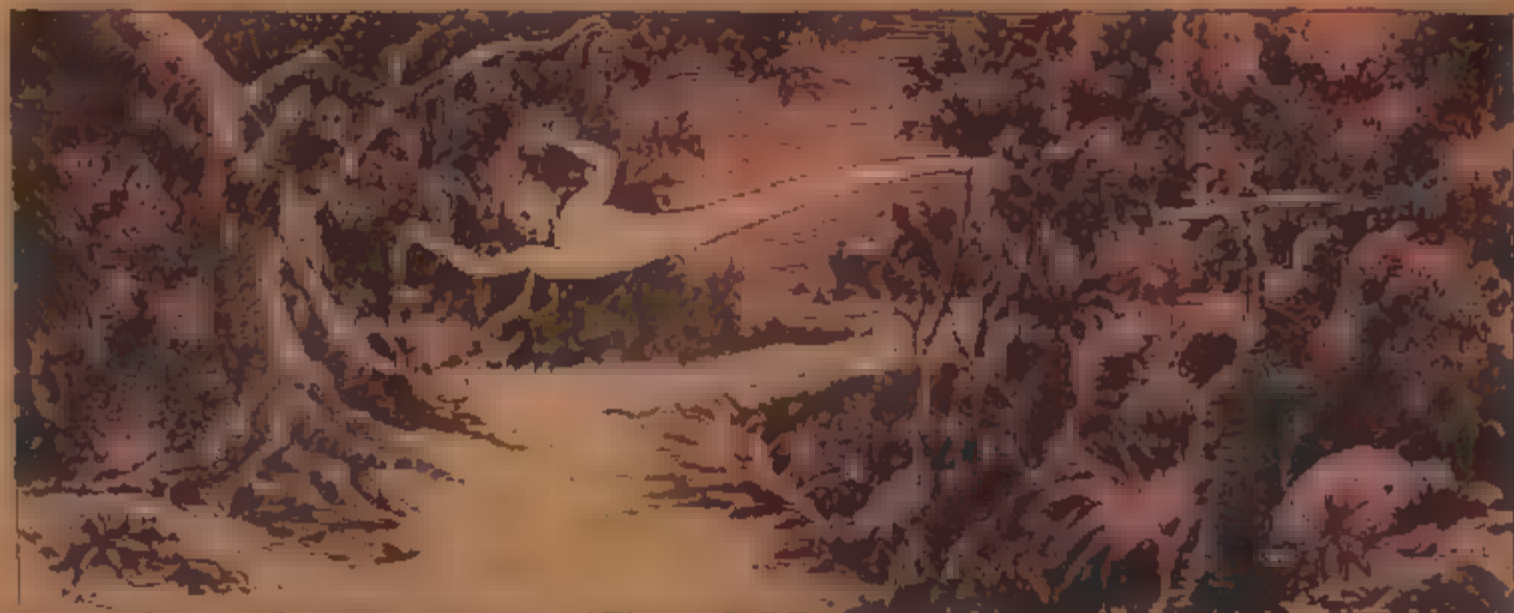
The arch-miser gave a start. "No, my lord, bandits will snatch them in no time. Let them be here and I will be here," he said.

"That's good. What about your own house and the wealth that is stored in it? Should we arrange to dispose them of and change the value into gold and bring it here?" asked the king.

"That should be fine, my lord," agreed the arch-miser.

It was done. The arch-miser passed his days sitting in front of the locked room or loitering around it.

The vampire paused for a moment and asked King Vik-



ram in a challenging tone, "O King, can you name a more whimsical ■■■■ than King Chandrasen? What was the sense in making ■ gift of his valuable property to the miser? If he was not whimsical, he was a fool. What do you say?"

Answered King Vikram forthwith: "King Chandrasen was neither whimsical nor foolish. He knew very well that the fellow will never spend a pie's

worth of any thing from the treasure. On the other hand, the king got a jealous guard for his heirlooms. Evidently the fellow had nobody to call his own. His own property was changed into gold and added to the treasure. When he dies the property remains the king's!"

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.



THE MAGIC DRUM

Ramu: I've a magic drum. It yields enough money to meet my expense on ice-cream.

Subhas: You mean you just beat the drum and money comes ■■■■ of it?

Ramu: Not like that. My grandpa pays me five rupees a month, mother another five rupees, uncle, brother and our immediate neighbour three rupees each—so ■■■■ I don't ■■■■ the drum.

VANISHED INTO THIN AIR!

The year was 1915. A war was going on near Istanbul in Turkey.

A British regiment was preparing to march into the city. It was waiting for the command, taking position on a hill.

The command came soon. But it was not obeyed—because there was nobody to obey it. The regiment was there a few minutes ago; it was not there ■ few minutes later. It was no-

where, however queer it might sound.

In 1918 the war was over. An investigation began to find out what happened to the regiment. The investigation went on for a long time. Nothing came out of it. The war-records put the regiment as "misssing."

Missing no doubt they were. But how?

Although the war-records do not say how, there were ■ number of people to claim that they



knew how. What they said, however, was fantastic.

They said that a white cloud slowly approached the hill-top. Standing below they saw the regiment being engulfed by the cloud. The cloud passed and the regiment had disappeared. As if the cloud had erased a picture.

Quite a strong wind was blowing at that time, but strangely the wind seemed to have no effect on the cloud. If the cloud was moving, it was moving according to some law of its own. That is the impression people who saw it from far got.

What did the cloud do to the soldiers? One explanation is, a flying ship from some other

planet approached the regiment and swept it away into itself.

We can laugh away such an explanation if we please, but we ought not to do so before reading *Passport to Magonia* by the French author and scientist, Jacques Vallee. He wrote the book after a thorough enquiry. He concludes that the regiment indeed was swallowed up by the 'cloud' that concealed a UFO.

Frank Edward's book *Stranger than Fiction* records another incident of unexplained disappearance. There was a small Eskimo village called Angikuni in the Northwest frontier of Canada. In 1930 it was found that the entire population of the



village had clean disappeared. Their homes were in perfect order. There was nothing to suggest that there had been any preparation for ■ departure. There was not the slightest sign of any disturbance, tussle, accident, violence or mishap. It seems all were amidst their routine chores—and had suddenly left the work halfway and were gone. Even there was no sign of any hurried departure.

The Government of Canada left no stone unturned to find out the whereabouts of those people. No clue was available; not even one of the villagers was traced anywhere, no witness was found to say a word about

what might have happened to them.

We chose to cite only cases that ■ relatively close to our time and about which records are available. But there are several other cases of mysterious disappearances. For example, all the villagers of Angkor Wat, the world's largest temple complex in Cambodia, mysteriously abandoned their place and went away—nobody knows where. But that was centuries ago—in 1431. A man called David Lang, ■ Tennessee farmer, is believed to have vanished before the wide-open eyes of several friends including ■ judge, August Peck, in 1880.





AND PARABLES OF INDIA

THE OCHRE ROBE

A hullabaloo was heard. It was still dark though the eastern sky had started looking bright.

"Thieves, thieves!" several people shouted and some of them braved into the street to lay their hands on the culprits.

The thieves were as fast as horses. They were two. They scaled the city wall. The crowd pursuing them threw stones at them. Narrow was their escape.

They ran through a rocky ground. Soon voices and footsteps were heard behind them. They doubled their speed.

There was a river. Of the two thieves, one knew swimming. He jumped into the flow and

was no more visible in the dusk.

The other one stopped. He could not swim. If he stood there, he was bound to be caught by the mob coming fast behind him. He would be thrashed and then dragged to the Kotwal's office.

He looked here and there with panic. Soon he heard cries, "Where did the fellow go?" "Must be hiding somewhere here!"

He found an ochre robe lying on a rock. Hurriedly he put it on and sat down on the river-bank, cross-legged. He kept his gaze fixed on the eastern horizon, as if he was meditating on the rising sun!

The crowd reached the spot the next moment. Some of them approached the ochre-robed thief and asked him gently, "Holy man, did you by any chance see two thieves running away?"

The thief said nothing. The people felt rather guilty for having disturbed him. They bowed to him and left the spot.

Soon out of the river emerged a hermit. It was his robe that the thief had put on.

The thief stood up and then prostrated himself to the hermit. "Don't bother to return my robe, son. I have a spare set in my bag," said the compassionate hermit.

The hermit then crossed the river by the bridge. The thief followed him. They reached the other bank.

The thief that had escaped by

swimming jumped up before his friend, all smiles, and said, "So, both of us escaped! Come, let's go."

But the first thief did not answer him. He continued to follow the hermit.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded the second thief, quite surprised.

"By changing my mere outward appearance I was not only spared the thrashing, but also shown respect. How much more should I not get only if I can change my mind and heart? My friend, I am no longer with you. Should you wish, you can be with me!" answered the man who had been a thief till a moment ago.

He continued to follow the hermit. His friend looked on not knowing what to do.



A BIT TOO HASTY: A BIT TOO LATE

A villager lived in a town for ten years. He was young. He worked hard every day of the year not caring for leisure or comfort.

He spent a little for his food and clothing and deposited his earning with the chief of a monastery. At the end of ten years he had collected a good deal of money. He now decided to return to his village, build a house and open a shop.

His village was a day's walk. He started for it in the morning carrying the load of his money

on his back.

It was a rather hot day and there was no shelter on the roadside save the palm trees that gave little shade. By noon the load tired him.

A man riding a horse who was going in the same direction as the villager stopped under a palm tree and drank water from his leather-bag.

"Where are you going, O Traveller?" asked the villager.

"To the village yonder and even beyond, to my place of work in a town. But I'll pass my



night in the village inn," replied the traveller.

"How fine! The village inn belongs to my uncle. Will you mind carrying this load on your horse and leaving it with my uncle? I shall be there before the sun sets and shall collect it from him. Carrying this tires me," said the villager.

"If it tires you, it should tire my horse as well! Sorry, friend, I cannot oblige you," said the rider. He then trotted away.

He had gone only a few yards when he thought, "Was I not a fool to refuse to take charge of the load? If I find that it contains something valuable, I can very well gallop off to my town without dropping in at the village inn!" He pulled the rein of

his horse and turned back.

Just then the villager was thinking, "What a fool I was in asking a total stranger to take charge of my hard-earned money? What could have I done had he escaped with the bag? Should I feel reluctant to toil for a day more and lose the fruit of my ten years of toil?"

"Here I am, friend, ready to help you, on second thought. Come on, let me carry the load for you," said the rider.

"On second thought, my friend, I decided to carry my load myself!" said the villager with a twinkle in his eyes. "You're a bit too late as I was a bit too hasty!"

Both understood each other's minds. The rider galloped away.



**STORY ■ INDIA-75**

HUMAYUN AND SHAH

At the age of 23 Humayun succeeded his father to the throne of the Mughal territories in India with Agra as his capital, in 1530. He loved luxury and was fond of hunting. He did not pay much attention to the consolidation of the empire founded by his ambitious father.

That was ~~the~~ ~~time~~ when ~~the~~ Afghan, Sher Shah, was growing to be a powerful ruler in India. His father was a Jagirdar at Sasaram in Bihar. Humiliated by his step-mother in his boyhood, Sher Shah, then known as Fand, fled to Jaunpur.



As a young man Feroz one day confronted a tiger and killed the beast single-handed. This act of heroism of the young man inspired the Sultan of Bihar to bestow the title of Sher Shah on him. Sher Shah observed the military tactics of Babur and learnt much from his example.



Through a number of manoeuvres, Sher Shah became the ruler of Bihar. Humayun had to combat his growing influence. Several battles were fought. Almost every time Humayun was defeated, thanks to his instinctive aversion to war and organisation.

Once Sher Shah's army cornered Humayun's soldiers in such a way that many of them were obliged to jump into the river Ganga. Hundreds of them were drowned. Humayun himself too was on the verge of death, as he was not a good swimmer.



Humayun, unable to make his way against the strong current, was about to drown when a Visti or a professional water-carrier saw him and drew him on to his leather bag inflated by air and guided him to the other shore. Thus was the king's life saved by a commoner.



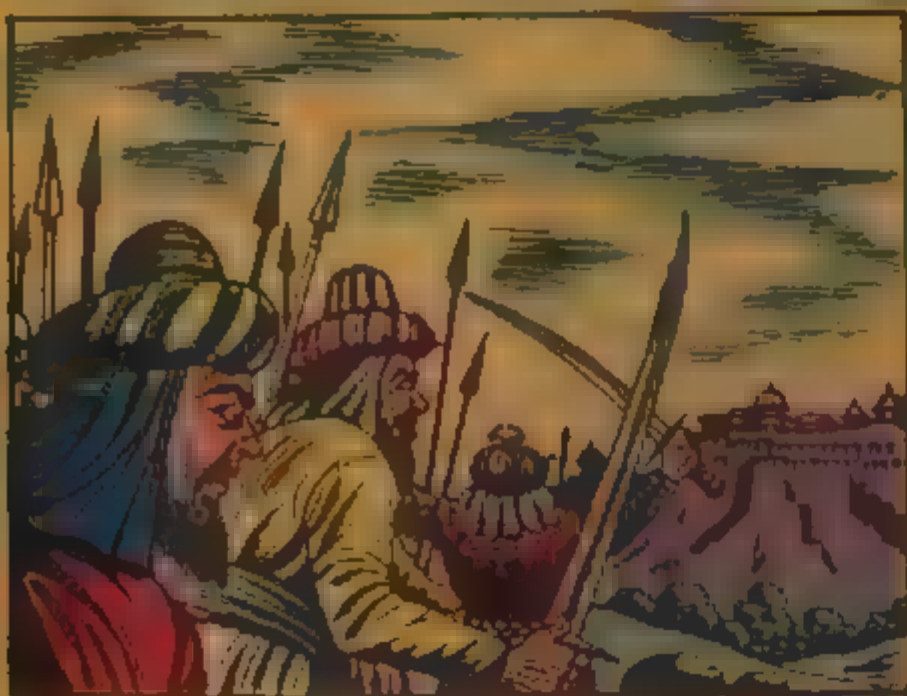
Much later the grateful Humayun let the visitor sit on his throne for a day. As a symbolic exercise of his authority, the visitor cut his leather bag into pieces and presented them to his friends as mementos of the unforgettable day in his life.

As several attempts by Humayun failed to settle him on the throne and he was harassed by enemies, he took shelter in the household of the Hindu ruler of Amarkot. A son was born to his queen Begum Hamida Banu there. This was the child who was to become famous as Akbar.



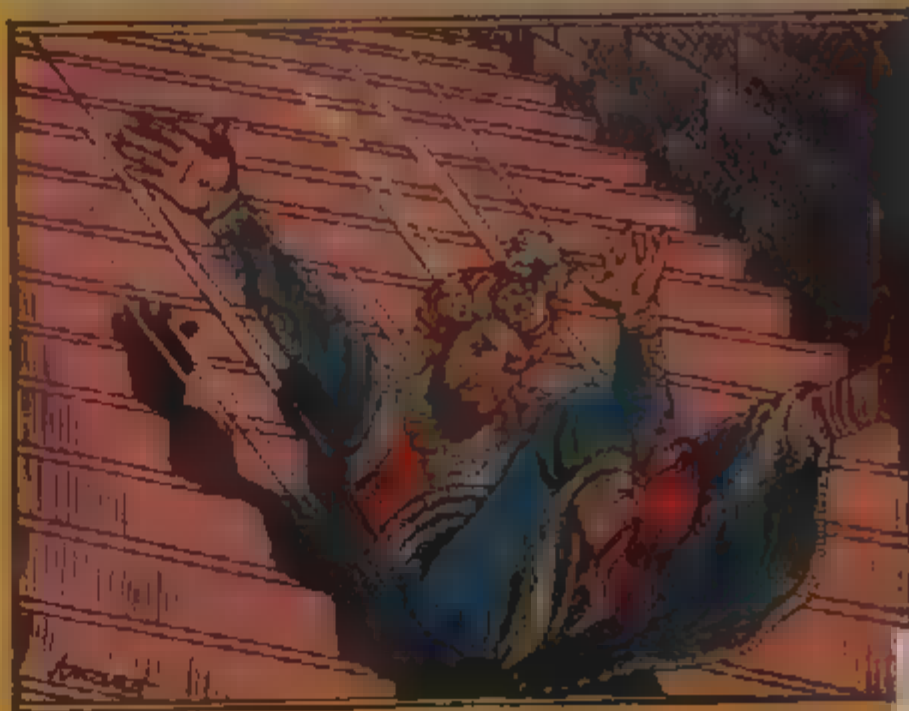
Sher Shah occupied Delhi and soon brought under his control the hilly principalities of north India and the greater part of eastern India. Sher Shah consolidated his authority and introduced many reforms in his empire. He proved an ideal and able ruler. His dynasty was known as the Sur Dynasty.

Sher Shah—who now proclaimed himself Sher Khan—fought many battles with the Rajputs. During a battle around the Fort of Kalinjar, his gunpowder store exploded as a spark fell on it. Sher Shah, who was nearby, was wounded and soon he died.



Humayun who had retreated to Kandahar heard about Sher Shah's death and the chaos that followed. He returned to India after fifteen years to reclaim his lost empire. By now he had learnt to be vigilant and quite disciplined.

In 1555 Humayun captured Lahore, Agra and Delhi with ease and re-established the Mughal rule. But he was not destined to enjoy his new-found glory. He had a fall from the top rung of the staircase leading to his library. This caused his death in 1556, within a year of his return to India.



THE MIRACLE STICK

Long ago there was a poor man who desired to lead a luxurious life. But he was too lazy to work. He turned to begging. But he found it very difficult to make a living with the small coins or morsels of food thrown at him by people in the way of charity.

It took no time for him to realize that begging won't make him rich. And he thought of stealing. But what when caught?... The vision of being thrashed did not let him take to

that way.

Across the forest there was a temple visited by very few people. He spent a long time in prayer there. His sincerity yielded fruit. He saw the deity emerging from the stone idol and standing before him in all His glory.

The beggar's heart jumped in joy. Tears flowed down his cheeks and he prostrated himself to the deity.

The deity blessed him and said: "I am pleased with your





patience and sincerity. What would you like to have as a boon?"

The beggar stood up and replied: "My Lord! All I crave for on this earth is money. If you give me that—how happy you make me!"

"Money? How can that make you happy? If you want to be happy, you must be free from wrong passions like anger, lust ..."

"God, I know how to be happy with money. Just give me the money and see how I give up all my wrong passions!" said the beggar.

The deity quietly handed over

a stick to him.

The beggar looked at the deity with suspicion. "My Lord! I requested for money, but you gave me a stick!"

"If I give you money here and now, you would not be able to carry the load with you. That is why I gave you this stick."

"And what do you want me to do with this stick?" asked the beggar.

All you have to do is to tap the ground three times with the end of the stick whenever you need money. And at once a hundred gold coins will spring up," replied the deity.

Unable to believe the deity's words, the beggar asked, "This stick! Will it be able to produce a hundred gold coins?"

"Why not try?"

The beggar tapped the ground thrice as advised and to his amazement saw the stick producing a hundred gold coins in a trice.

"Wonderful! Wonderful! what a great boon you have given me!" cried the beggar. "How many times can I be benefited by this?"

"Any number of times! Whenever you tap thrice, it will work. But always remember that you should never become

angry with anyone. The stick will fail to work if you become." The deity vanished. The entire forest became dark again.

The beggar, to make doubly sure, tapped again and rejoiced at the result. He made a bundle of the two hundred gold coins and began walking towards his home.

On his way he spoke to himself thus: "Never, never I should become angry. I should not be offended even if I am abused. If by chance I am offended, I should see to it that I run away from the place before I am angry. This miracle stick will make me the richest man on

earth. And who will dare to offend the richest man?"

He handled his stick like an adept in lathi-play and strutted along. He saw a hermit as he would enter the village.

"How goes the world with you?" the would-be richest man asked the hermit in a jubilant tone.

"You seem to be very cheerful! What's the matter with you?" asked the hermit.

"Who will not be cheerful with a money-yielding stick at his disposal? Look at this. Just three taps on the ground and I am richer by a hundred gold coins.!"



"Is that so?" the hermit asked in a tone of surprise. "Can you demonstrate?"

"Why not! But you should not touch a single coin!"

The hermit looked with his mouth wide-open as the stick produced ■ hundred gold goins.

"Will it continue to give you so much whenever you tap thrice?" asked the hermit.

"No doubt about it," replied the beggar.

"How many times will it give you?"

"As many times as I please."

"A thousand times?"

"More!"

"Ten thousand times?"

"More, more! Did I not say as many times as I please!"

"A million times?"

"Why only a million? As many times ..."

"Really? Even ■ billion times?"

"You blockhead! Don't you understand me? Didn't I say as many times as I pleased? If you don't understand, get out of my way... Get out... Go to hell!" shouted the beggar making a swish of the stick.

The hermit smiled and vanished. Also were gone the miracle stick and the three hundred gold goins.

—Retold by P. Raja.





THE ISLAND OF ROGUES

Long ago in a certain port-town lived a prosperous merchant. On his death-bed he called his only son and said, "Carry on the family business as well as you can. Visit new ports and towns, but never go to Chanchak, the island of rogues."

After the merchant's death his son continued in the business. Once every two years he went out for trading with distant lands, but he avoided sailing for the island of Chanchak.

However, in the long run curiosity got the better of him. Six years after his father's death he visited Chanchak with four boats.

His boats touched the shore at night. In the morning, while enjoying a stroll along the shore, he shot an arrow at a stork, killing it.

"What did you do, you stranger? How could you kill my father?" A fisherman rushed upon him, shouting.

"Your father? But I have killed only a stork!" said the surprised young man.

"It was no ordinary stork but my father's soul reincarnated as a stork. It used to help me catch fish. Pay me compensation!" demanded the fisherman.

"What do you expect as compensation?"

"All your wealth won't be enough for that. But I'll be kind to a stranger. Surrender one of your boats to me!" said the fisherman.

"How absurd! Get out!" shrieked the young man.

"Very well, I'll appeal to our King!" the fellow left the young merchant in a huff.

The young man walked to-



wards the bazar. A lady stopped him and exclaimed, "So! I've got you at last! You see, when I was in your country, I fell short of money. Your father gave me a hundred rupees when I pledged my right ear to him. Look here!"

The lady removed a part of the hood she wore. Her right ear was missing.

"If you cannot return my ear, I must demand one of your boats in lieu of it," said the lady.

The young man, feeling disgusted and perplexed, had walked a furlong more when another lady confronted him with an unexpected claim.

"Look here, sonny, your father married ■ upon one of his visits to this island. Now it is your responsibility to maintain me. Give ■ fifty thousand rupees or one of your boats!" she said coolly.

"Shut up! My father never married you!" shouted the young man.

"Don't shout ■ me. Let our king decide the case." The lady headed towards the royal palace.

"Young man, why don't you have a shave?" asked a barber.

"How much would you charge for it?"

"Just give enough for me to go away happy!" said the barber.

The young man had a shave and offered a rupee to the barber.

"How do you expect this much to make me happy?" asked the barber. The young merchant was ready to give him upto five rupees. But the barber declared that nothing less than a full boat would satisfy him!

They were arguing when the king's messenger arrived on the scene and summoned the young man to the palace. The fisherman, the two ladies and the barber submitted their grie-

vances to the king and each demanded a boat.

"You all seem justified in your claims," said the king.

Just then the king's young son entered the court. The young merchant wore a charming necklace studded with jewels. The little prince looked at it again and again. The merchant took it out and threw it round the prince's neck. The king smiled and everyone present applauded. "We are all so happy!" said some of them.

"You wished to go happy. Does this event not make you happy?" the young merchant asked the barber.

The barber had to admit that he was happy. "Since you are happy, you need not have a boat," the king said and waved his hand signalling the barber to leave the court at once.

The merchant looked at the first lady and said, "In my father's store-room there lie hundreds of ears pledged by different borrowers. It will be difficult for me to locate yours unless you let me cut away your remaining ear. By pairing with it, I'll find out your ear and I'll restore both to you."

"That is quite reasonable," said the king. The merchant



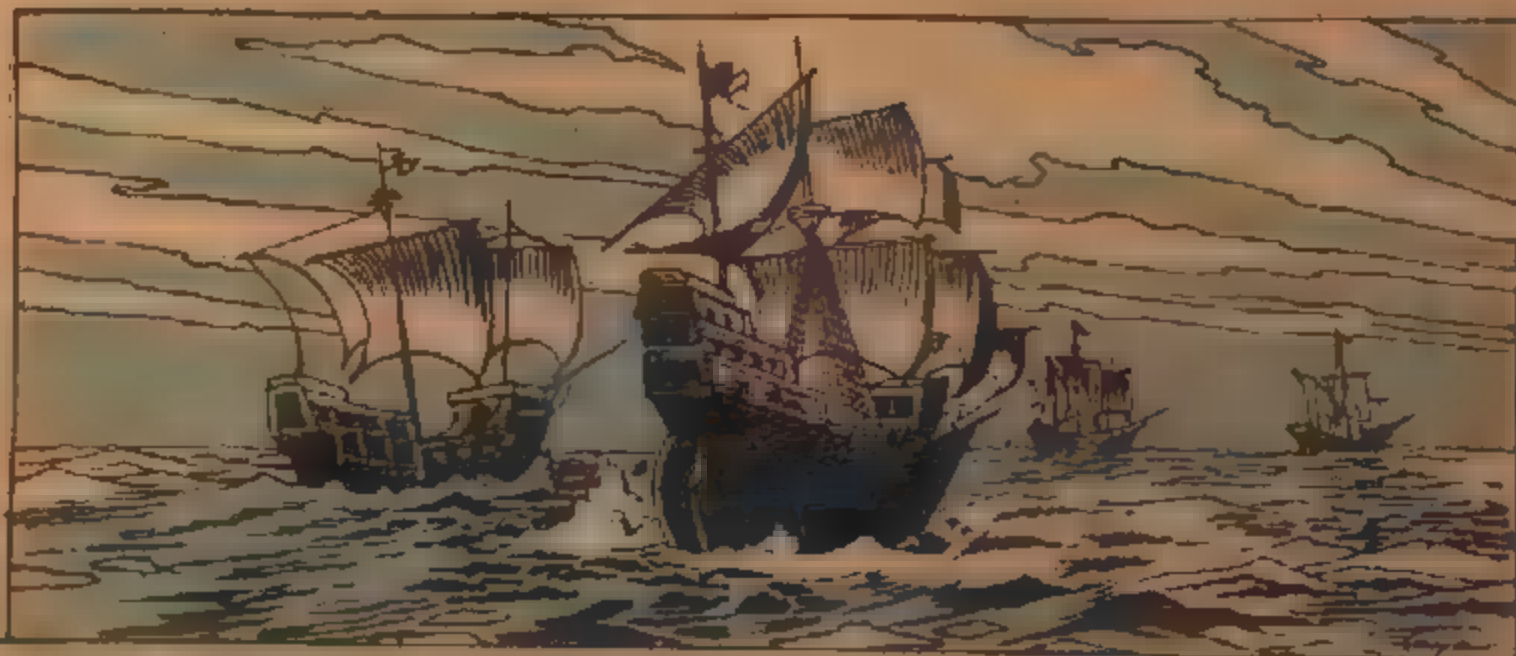
took out a knife from his pocket and took a step towards the lady.

"Never mind my ear!" said the lady and she left the court in a hurry.

"And so far as you're concerned," said the young merchant turning to the second lady, "You are a sinner for continuing to live after my father's death. In my country the wives voluntarily die as soon as their husbands die. I must arrange for a pyre and see to it that you enter it!"

Without a word the lady sneaked away.

"Now, you fisherman, your



father the stork gobbled up a fish that was the reincarnation of my father's soul and was guiding my boats. That is why I killed the stork. You ought to regret your father's conduct!" said the merchant.

"Right." The king nodded.

The fisherman left the court after saluting the king.

The merchant thanked the king and sailed away as soon as possible. "How right my father was in warning me against coming here!" he told his crew and friends.

CONTESTS FOR ■■■ '83

Entries should reach the Editor, Chandamama (English), 188 Arcot Road Madras—600 026 on or before the 15th of March. A reward of Rs. 50.00 will go to the winner. When there are more than one winner, each will get ■ reward of Rs. 25.00 in each of the two categories.

CONTEST A

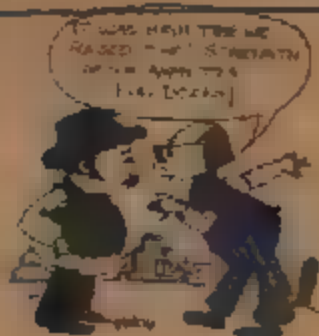
Write in 200-300 words a funny experience of your life.

CONTEST ■

- (1) The greater part of one of the largest selling books in English was written while the author was in jail. Who is the author and what is the book?
- (2) Who is the famous living instrumental musician who gave his first public concert at the ■■ of eight?
- (3) Who is the great Indian poet in whose memory an annual festival is held? Write about him in 20-25 words.



LET US KNOW



Which one is the smallest army in the world?

—Shashi S.Kowshik, Bandra.

San Marino in northern Italy is the world's smallest republic with an area of 24 sq.km. It has the world's smallest army, the soldiers numbering 11.

What is ■ Anagram and what is ■ Antigram?

—Jaya Ghosh, Kharagpur

When a word ■ a phrase emerges by a new arrangement of the letters used in another word or phrase, it is *Anagram*. Thus, when re-arranged, the letters used in *Punishment* can become *Nine Thumps*; *Steamer* can become *Sea Term*.

Antigram is a kind of anagram with ■ difference. In this the new word is opposite in meaning to the original word. *Violence* can be antigrammatised to *Nice Love*, *Marital* can become *Martial*



When did the 1st and the 2nd World Wars begin and end?

The 1st World War began in 1914 with the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand and his wife. It ended in 1918. The 2nd World War practically began in 1938 with Germany invading Austria, but it took a serious turn only in 1939 with Germany invading Poland, and Britain and France declaring war on Germany. It ended in 1945.

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. [REDACTED]



Mr. Sampat Yadav

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs.50/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for January '83 goes to:

Mr. Sneha Rao, C/o. Visual Communication,
12 Blunton Cross Road, Bangalore-560 025.

The Winning Entry: 'Thoughtful Learning'—'Playful Churning'

**PICKS FROM
THE WISE**

To abstain from sin when a man cannot sin is to be forsaken by sin,
not to forsake it.

—Saint Augustine.

You can [REDACTED] a boy out of the country but you can't take the
country out of a boy.

—Arthur Baer.

[REDACTED] all said to people's [REDACTED] what we say behind each other's
backs, society would be impossible.

—Honore de Balzac.

**When health
is great
fun**



A Doctor at home. A Doctor at 10.
A Doctor for the future. A heart-throb
of a child, she is learning. Preparing for
the great days ahead.

It's the age. The age of learning,
discovering. Growing up with health
and fun. With sweet memories. And
nourishing thoughts. Like biscuits.

Kwality's Glucos. Made with the best
of ingredients for health and
nourishment. Prepared hygienically.



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ONLY 14! AND YOU ARE ASKING FOR A WATCH ALREADY, YOUNG LADY?

Now her parents are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that the little girl has blossomed into a lovely young lady. The dilemma is to be that she is neither too young nor old enough. . . Does she really need a watch?

But to her, this young lady on the threshold of a life full of promises a wrist watch is more than just a need.

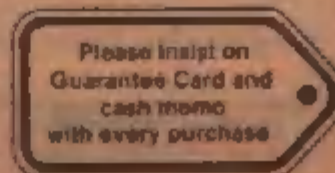
It's a necessity, in these changing times. Yes, after all, how long in her youth can she really afford to be 'timeless'?

She's growing. It's an age that's a gift of time.

Get her an HMT watch—because one good time deserves another.



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POPPINS TANTRA

Ram and Shyam
have a tale to tell,
Listen kids
and listen well.



PARLE



In a beautiful lake in a valley
Lived many fish both big and small,
And with them stayed a white crane
Lovingly called 'Uncle' by all.

However it came to pass
That 'Uncle' vacationing was,
And then—came fish-eating Crane
For this was his chance heaven-sent!

The fish all asked him who he was,
"I'm Uncle Swan's brother," he smiled,
They all believed him because
He looked every bit just as white.

So they swam to him quite happily
But they didn't see his beak open wide
Before you could say 'Jack Robinson'
Three-quarters of them were inside.

So quality, dear friends, don't you see,
Is really what matters to all.
Fakes give tummy-aches and more
While Poppins above all stand tall.



So just don't let fakes fool you ever,
And you know there are so many around.
Only Poppins have silver-striped covers,
Only Poppins in excellence abound.

